



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

telegraphic system of Southern Queensland was already being extended to Port Denison (20° s. lat.), and Mr. Cracknell, the superintendent, saw no difficulty in carrying it thence to the mouth of the Albert River, in the Gulf of Carpentaria, as sufficient suitable timber is at hand throughout the whole route.

3.—*Overland Journey from Rockhampton to Port Denison, viâ Bowen Downs and the Salt Lake.* By W. LANDSBOROUGH, Esq.

(Communicated by the GOVERNOR of QUEENSLAND.)

IN the end of last year and beginning of this year (1865) I made an excursion, 900 miles in extent, from Rockhampton to Port Denison, *viâ* the Mitchell District. My route lay chiefly over a tract of country which but a few years ago—that is, at the period of the Separation of Queensland from New South Wales—was an uninhabited waste. With the view of furnishing a sample of colonial progress, I purpose noting down a few particulars of my journey.

Rockhampton, my point of departure, has risen in eight years to the position of a thriving town of five or six thousand inhabitants. It is situated on the Fitzroy River, which is formed by a junction of the Dawson and Mackenzie. This town is the outlet for the wool produce of the Comet, Peak Downs, and Barcoo. Fortunate in having the companionship of a few friends, I was doubly so in having secured the services of a black boy, who proved very useful in mustering the horses every morning, saddling and packing them, fetching water, lighting fires, and washing our clothes. For 80 miles to the westward of Rockhampton, the road was thronged with travellers and drays; the townward ones being laden with wool, the return ones with station supplies. I observed that horse teams were becoming more common, probably on account of the prevalence of pleuro-pneumonia, which has lately proved so fatal to cattle. Along this route, as far as the Dawson, every facility in the shape of hotels and good roads is presented to the traveller. The Dawson is easily fordable except during floods, when there is the convenience of a punt. On the further bank, the road branches off into two, *viz.*, the Peak Downs and the Barcoo roads. Following the latter, I met with no hotel for a distance of 133 miles, but there is the usual resource of sheep stations within easy riding distance of each other.

The line now crossed is the watershed of the Comet and the Nogoa Rivers of the Leichhardt District,—perhaps the finest grazing country of North Queensland. At Mantuan Downs, about 325 miles from Rockhampton, I diverged to the right from the Barcoo road, following a by-path called Hodson's Track, which leads to Arramac Creek, a feeder of the Thomson. The more common route, by the Barcoo, is 100 miles longer, but possesses the advantage of avoiding an extensive tract of poor country stretching northwards. This is variously styled the "tridia," the "poison" country and the "Desert." The poison plant (*Gastrolobium grandiflorum*) abounds on its sandstone ranges, and Mr. Hodson, who first took sheep over it, lost nearly a thousand at one place. A ride of 16 miles brought us to Fairview Station, on Balmy Downs—one of the best sheep-walks of the Leichhardt District, which comprises the watershed of the Comet, Nogoa, and Isaac Rivers; and next day's ride of 35 miles lay over the Belyando watershed of the Kennedy District.

Having enjoyed the hospitalities of the proprietors of Alpha Station, we prepared to cross the Desert alluded to. The country being uninhabited, except by wild blacks, for a distance of 165 miles, we bought a good supply of provisions, and put our firearms, for the first time, in order. A ride of 10 miles took us over the Belyando Range into the Mitchell District, and we continued our journey 20 miles further before encamping. Our second day's journey was

protracted to an undesirable length, from our omitting to encamp at Birkhead Creek, where, being only a 20-mile stage, and not knowing what was before us, we encamped just long enough for dinner. Subsequently the darkness prevented our detecting other water-holes, until we had accomplished an additional ride of 32 miles—the entire journey having kept us thirteen hours in the saddle.* At first we were chagrined on finding that the water was salt; but a minute search resulted in the discovery of a fresh-water hole, singularly enough in the midst of the others.† The general character of the country, as far as Birkhead Creek, was sandy and rather level; yet that the pasturage is good, was proved by Mr. Hodson's sheep having for a considerable time thriven well upon it. Thenceforward, for about 15 miles, the land was very much infested with *triodia*—a bad description of grass, and with occasionally high barren ridges with the poison plant. Nevertheless, the country on the whole was fair to the eye; but woe betide the squatter who is ever deceived by its treacherous appearance, for this was the scene of Hodson's disaster above alluded to, and the bleached bones of the sheep scattered over the surface told the luckless tale. The latter part of the way comprised rich plains, abounding with those infallible indications of excellent pasturage, the tall cabbage saltbush. The only blacks we saw since leaving the Dawson we met with here; and these were represented by a few black gins, one of whom held a fat child in her arms. "Piccaninny"—originally, I imagine, a *negro* word—was the beginning and ending of our intelligent conversation.

At a distance of 18 miles, we reached the junction of a creek with the Alice River. The latter had all the characteristics of a fine river when flooded, but it was then represented by a wide sandy bed and water-holes, containing sometimes fresh, sometimes salt water. The adjoining country is poor, and infested with *triodia*; but the rearward country consisted of remarkably rich plains. The *triodia* ridges on the banks of the river, however, will doubtless prove serviceable for sheep in wet weather; while the *gidya* scrub—which I also observed on the rich land adjoining—will shelter them from the summer heats.

Next morning, the track brought us, from time to time, during a ride of 9 miles, in sight of the river; but we soon left it, and four miles further on encamped for dinner, on a low flat, subject during floods to inundation. Here we met with a traveller who had been deserted by a timid friend, and our acquaintance, being entirely unprovided with firearms, may be fairly considered as rash as his companion was timid. We were stupidly enough tempted by him to camp here for the night. We were now fairly on excellent pastoral country, and within a half day's journey of the stocked country of Arramac Creek,‡ which consists of fine tracts of grassy downs, belted with *gidya*, though wooded with another kind of acacia, called myall. Superior for fattening purposes to even the regions of the Comet and Nogoa, this district has the disadvantage of being farther from a sea-port, and more liable to drought.

A long ride brought us, by way of Messrs. Rule and Lacy's station to my destination, Wilby, on Arramac Creek, thirty miles above the point crossed by me in 1861, in the expedition in search of Burke and Wills. After our ride of 550 miles, we were not sorry to recruit ourselves and our horses.

* The pace was usually four miles an hour; and this is practically found as much as grass-fed horses, with a long journey before them, can easily manage.

† This is a common characteristic of Australian water-courses.

‡ On Stanford's Library Map of Australia, Arramac Creek is laid down with a south-west course; but in Owen's (a more recent map) the course, as shown by it, is nearly west for upwards of sixty miles. On this subject I cannot give a decided opinion, as I cannot lay my hands on the rough chart of Arramac Creek when I first discovered it.

In a fortnight we were again in the saddle, and our course now lay 40 miles due north to Bowen Downs Station, on Cornish Creek. During this entire journey we found no water. Nevertheless, the country was of a first-class description, and so free from trees that the wool-shed was visible at a distance of eight miles. Notwithstanding the absence of rain for eight months (except at the heads of the creeks) the stock of every kind—even on dry parts—was in a thriving condition. The only bush news we heard was that a herd of cattle had been safely taken hence to the Plains of Promise, near the Gulf of Carpentaria; and that in the same latitude, but some forty miles westward of my overland track, a fine river, flowing through excellent country, had lately been discovered. It was named the Darr, and may ultimately prove to be the main head of the Thomson.

After a sojourn of a week at Bowen Downs, we had the good fortune to meet with a traveller who was acquainted with the route to Port Denison. His intention was to meet a flock of sheep on the further side of the poison country, and to pave the way for them by cutting down the noxious plant. Our route lay north-east, in the direction of Suttor Creek, or (when the combined streams are spoken of) more properly, the Belyando.* There is abundance of water for 58 miles, as far as the Fisheries, on Cornish Creek. This point was so named as being a fishing-ground for the blacks, and their peculiar process of catching was to construct a hedge across the Creek. This is a dangerous locality, if one may judge from the mysterious disappearance, a few weeks previous, of my friend Mr. Meredith and an overseer. Their encampment had been since identified, and some of their property had been found in possession of the blacks. Altogether, they were both such good bushmen that there is no likelihood of their having been lost while searching for their horses in the morning; although they may have met their fate while so engaged. While in this region we kept a night-watch, somewhat to the surprise of our travelling companion, to whom the proceeding was entirely new. In fact, I found that ordinary travellers did not carry even firearms in this district, noted as it had become for the unexpected attacks of the blacks. We rode 13 miles further—as far as the Duck Ponds—without finding a trace of the poison plant, and here we found patches of excellent grass, amply sufficient for travelling stock. But we ere long found the plant alluded to, within eight miles of the “Public-house† Water-holes,” and subsequently in abundance on the ranges leading to the Salt Lake, whither the creek just mentioned flows. It naturally requires great expertness and caution on the part of the shepherd to keep his sheep from tasting the deadly plant, and it is now becoming the custom to send men ahead for the purpose of cutting it down. Still I think the evil may be obviated by a new track, provided the ranges on which the plant flourishes can be avoided, which is extremely probable.

With regard to the above-mentioned salt lake, I may mention that it was discovered by Mr. Buchanan from a tree which he had ascended for the purpose of viewing the country. It is several miles broad and 20 miles long; it is surrounded by wooded hills, and has no outlet. To the taste the water is more salt than that of the sea, and where evaporated on the margin the salt can be easily collected, and it has been proved to be so far fit for common use that it has been used by the settlers.

We had a fine view of this singular phenomenon from the Sandstone Cliffs near our encampment, and we bathed in a pool occasionally covered by the lake. The pungency of the water made our skins smart. This site being at the south end of the lake, and forming the unavoidable passage for drays, is

* The Suttor and the Belyando form the “Belyando”—not the “Suttor,” according to the maps.

† Doubtless so called for Paddy’s reason—that there is no public house there.

well adapted for a township. (The lake is named Buchanan Lake, from its first discoverer.) In that contingency, fresh water will doubtless be procured by sinking wells, or from M'Glashan's water-holes, in the neighbourhood. These will hold water during a six months' drought. I should mention that the shores of the lake are covered with salsolaceous herbs.

Passing the Whistling Duck Holes, we arrive at what is ludicrously named the Jumb—a sandstone dyke, rising several feet, and situated on the north-eastern range of the Salt Lake. This is, of course, a most difficult ascent for a team, and none but a remarkably strong dray could ascend it with impunity. But the teamsters on that route are not to be daunted by a mole-hill. We here had a farewell view of Buchanan Lake, and a ride of 4 miles brought us to deep sandstone water-holes called the Tanks, situated on the north-eastern side of the Belyando Range. The bleached bones of many sheep again proclaimed the proximity of the poison plant. Three thousand were lately lost on this track, but I have not heard of either horses or bullocks (except a few hungry ones that were turned out to feed near the Tank, where there is no grass) being poisoned.

Eight miles further on we left the poison country behind, and encamped at the Pigeon Water-holes, in the valley of the Belyando, and next day we successively passed Tomahawk Creek (6 miles), Rocky Creek (12 miles), Sandy Creek (21 miles), putting up at Bully Creek (33 miles). Here we gladly accepted the hospitality of that station and rested two days, the horses having travelled 163 miles.

The great valley of the Belyando, being profusely wooded with brigalow and gidya scrubs, has hitherto been little occupied; but as the sheep thrive well even in the thickets alluded to, I have no doubt this district will, when the blacks can be trusted, be in demand.

The last 100 miles of our journey lay through what is called by squatters "coast country," not generally the most favourable for sheep. Although the grass was more rank than hitherto, the country was picturesque, consisting of mountain and vale, while the margins of the watercourses were clothed with palms and other trees of luxuriant foliage, gracefully festooned with creeping plants.

Bowen, the town at Port Denison, has been known only since April, 1861, and already (1865) numbers above 1000 souls. It is picturesquely situated on Port Denison, within Edgumbe Bay, which are separated from each other by Stone Island, to which Gloucester Island, which shelters the outer bay from the ocean, is parallel. This latter island rises from the bosom of the deep much in the manner of the Scotch Isle of Arran, to which it in many other respects bears a close resemblance. The entire scene justifies the apparently boastful comparison of its inhabitants with the Bay of Naples; the distant island hills wear a lovely aspect, and the coast line of the mainland is in keeping with their bold grandeur. The high mountains on the coast are all the more beautiful from rising abruptly from the plains. For a tropical country the climate is pronounced excellent: severe frost in winter is sometimes felt within a few miles of the coast, while the summer heats are tempered with sea breezes.

Having had no intention of writing this paper at the time of my journey, I have had to trust principally to memory; and, therefore, could not fail to omit a variety of particulars of interest and future importance.

TABLE OF DISTANCES.

I. ROCKHAMPTON TO BOWEN DOWNS.		II. FROM BOWEN DOWNS TO PORT DENISON.	
	Miles.		Miles.
Rockhampton to Westwood Hotel	32	To crossing place of Cornish Creek	50
Thence to Rio	36	Thence to Fisheries	8
Knebworth Hotel	5	Duck Ponds	13
Roxburgh	6	Place called Public-house Water-holes	25
Nulalbin	28	Water-holes, a mile to the right of the road	10
Barangal	20	South end of Lake Buchanan, or Salt Lake	1
Bauhinia Downs	12	Whistling Duck Water-holes	6
Planet Downs	40	Jump on the range	4
Sheridan's	12	Natural Sandstone Tank	4
Albinia Downs	22	Pigeon Water-holes	8
Orion Downs	25	Tomahawk Creek	6
Rainsworth	18	Rocky Creek	6
Springsure	5	Sandy Creek	9
Mantuan Downs	60	Douthy's Camp	8
Fairview	16	Bully Creek	5
Alpha	35	Vine Creek Station, near Belyando River	20
Belyando Range	10	Cattle Station on Belyando River	31
Hodson's Old Yards	28	St. Ann's on Belyando River ..	16
Birkhead Creek	12	Mount Wyatt	18
Chain of salt and fresh water-holes	32	Hidden Vale	12
Alice River Crossing-place	16	Strathmore	25
Gidya Scrub water-holes	15	Bogie Public-house	25
Springs	23	Bowen (Port Denison)	40
Rule and Lacy's	29		
Wilby	16		
Bowen Downs	40		
	<hr/> 593		<hr/> 350

4. *Extracts from Commander W. F. RUXTON's Report on various Rivers on the West Coast of Africa.*

(Communicated by the FOREIGN OFFICE.)

THE following items of information, chiefly Geographical, are contained in the despatches of Commander Ruxton to his commanding officer, Commodore A. P. Eardley Wilmot :—

Mellacorree River.—The slaves in this country, who are very seldom sold to foreigners, are carried partly by canoes and partly by land round at the back of Sierra Leone, from the Sherboro, through and from Quia, across to Sierra Leone River, and are sold among the Zoozoos, and in the Barrizee country. The lawful trade of the district is very considerable, and no slave-ships have been in the river for many years. Horses, cattle, and sheep are in great plenty. Morriceaniah and Mallageah are both large towns, stockaded, with a population principally Mussulman. There is a Marabout priest, a Fellatah, I think, at the former place, who exercises some control; but the chief is Yemba Lamina. The headmen of houses or elders have, however, the real power.

Dobreeka River.—Vessels of 10 feet draught can go up this river a long way—40 or 50 miles. It runs from the eastward, making a bend round the Peak of Kakulimah, and finds its way into the sea opposite the Isles de